



BLUE TALKS

BRIDGES TO LISBON TO THE UNITED NATIONS OCEANS CONFERENCE

CONCEPT NOTE

Cairo | May 29

MANAGING, PROTECTING, CONSERVING AND RESTORING MARINE AND COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS

key-issues

- How to promote more partnerships between governments and organizations to establish wider, ecologically, and effectively connected networks of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)?
- What actions should be taken to develop methodologies and indicators to assess the effectiveness of protected areas? The importance of science-based tools in MPAs management and designation.
- What mechanisms exist to improve the sharing of information on the effectiveness of protected areas? Are MPAs sufficient? Which additional tools are at our disposal?
- Restoring action for already impacted species and ecosystems.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) – sites set aside for long-term conservation purposes, usually meticulously selected based on their crucial importance for the balance of the oceans' ecosystems – among other existing instruments, have been consistently considered and used by governmental authorities as one of the primary tools to mitigate the impact of human actions in the maritime sphere. The goal of designating 30% of the Ocean as MPAs until 2030 is currently under discussion for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Nonetheless, designating, implementing, and monitoring MPAs is extremely challenging, considering most marine biodiversity hotspots tend to attract human uses and become socio-economic epicenters. If this dimension fails to be considered in the framework of establishing MPAs, which can come in various forms (size, types of ecosystems tackled or degree of protection), it can result in socio-economic challenges.

While these selected areas carry a positive materialization of ocean conservation debates worldwide, MPAs aren't sufficient to tackle comprehensively all challenges of biodiversity loss. The underrepresentation of certain species and ecosystems, in this scenario, is undeniable as

some maritime species may require larger MPAs and/or additional conservation measures – migratory species, such as cetaceans or tunas, are a perfect example of this concern.

In the meantime, innovative science-based solutions that may be quickly implemented are required to increase biodiversity and address climate change.

Therefore, and with regard to the ocean issues, conservation actions, such as MPAs, imply a coordinated cross-sectoral approach. From science-based recommendations presented by academia and scientific networks, to the insights and experience of fishing communities and regional authorities, without forgetting the financial resources for investment in R&D of the private sector, it is clear that there are beneficial contributions from a multi-stakeholder collaboration and coordination on the topic.

Portugal has been internationally leading the debate on the fundamental importance of MPAs in fostering biodiversity protection. A proposal for the establishment of the largest marine protected area in the North Atlantic (Ilhas Selvagens) has been put forward, while also hosting, in Portugal, partnership-oriented solutions that strengthen the creation of conservation sites, such as the AIR Centre in Azores.